

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/849,259

Examiner

Karla Moore

Applicant(s)

KITANO ET AL.

Art Unit

1763

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to amendment filed 5/19/04.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 11,13,14 and 16-21.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 07 May 2001 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 0604
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

DETAILED ACTION

Allowable Subject Matter

1. Claims 11, 13-14 and 16-21 are allowed.
2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance for claims 13, 16-18 and 20: The prior art fails to teach or fairly suggest a coating and developing treatment system for performing a coating and developing treatment for a substrate, comprising: a processing zone having a coating treatment unit for forming a coating a layer on the substrate, a developing treatment unit for performing a developing treatment for the substrate, and a heat treatment unit for performing a heat treatment for the substrate; an interface section for carrying the substrate between said processing zone and an aligner not included in the system for performing an exposure processing for the substrate; a density measuring unit for measuring the density of impurities at least inside said processing zone or said interface section; a reduced-pressure impurity removing unit having a chamber which can be closed airtightly for reducing the pressure inside the chamber to a predetermined pressure before the substrate undergoes the exposure processing to remove the impurities adhering to the coating layer on the substrate inside the chamber for a predetermined time; and a reduced pressure control unit for controlling pressure-reducing speed of the reduced-pressure impurity removing unit based on the value measured by said density measuring unit.
3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance for claims 11, 14, 19 and 21: The prior art fails to teach or fairly suggest a coating and developing treatment system for performing a coating and developing treatment for a substrate, comprising: a processing zone having a coating treatment unit for forming a coating a layer on the substrate, a developing

treatment unit for performing a developing treatment for the substrate, and a heat treatment unit for performing a heat treatment for the substrate; an interface section for carrying the substrate between said processing zone and an aligner not included in the system for performing an exposure processing for the substrate; a density measuring unit for measuring the density of impurities at least inside said processing zone or said interface section; a reduced-pressure impurity removing unit having a chamber which can be closed airtightly for reducing the pressure inside the chamber to a predetermined pressure before the substrate undergoes the exposure processing to remove the impurities adhering to the coating layer on the substrate inside the chamber for a predetermined time; a reduced pressure control unit for controlling at least the predetermine pressure or predetermined time base on the value measured by said density measuring unit; and a controller for classifying the density of the impurities into predetermined density ranges, storing the predetermined pressure and the predetermined time corresponding to the respective density ranges, and controlling said reduced-pressure control unit to adjust the predetermined pressure and the predetermined time equal to the stored predetermined pressure and predetermined time corresponding to the predetermined density range to which the measured value belongs. Further, no other prior art reference was located which taught or fairly suggested the limitation and provided the requisite motivation for combination.

4. The closest piece of prior art is Japanese Patent No. 09-260275 to Yaegashi et al. Yaegashi et al. fail to disclose the above underlined limitation. Further, no other prior art reference was located which taught or fairly suggested the limitation and provided the requisite motivation for combination.

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Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

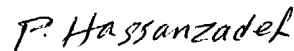
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Karla Moore whose telephone number is 571.272.1440. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gregory Mills can be reached on 571.272.1439. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



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9 August 2004



Parviz Hassanzadeh
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1763